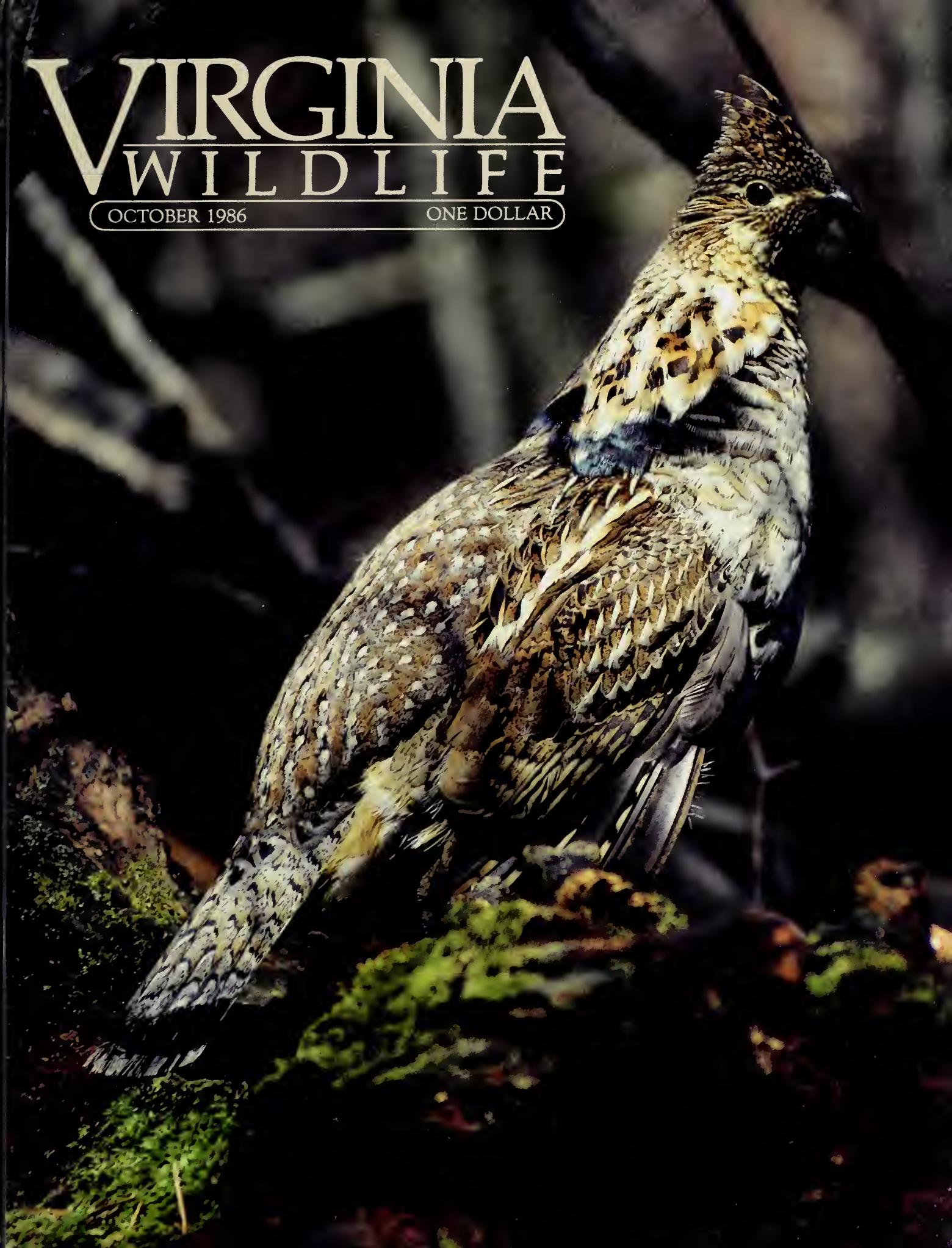


# VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

OCTOBER 1986

ONE DOLLAR



The wind was moving opening day this year. It was cool, overcast, and it even rained some. It was a rare occurrence. Even rarer still was that the birds were flying. And as always, when the hunting's good, the men find it hard to put their guns up until they're out of shells. They start shooting fast and getting their limits early. Some of them start throwing a few doves into someone else's pile of two or three birds, and some of them take a little walk into the woods when nobody's looking to hide a few doves. After all, when the day's only half-spent and the doves are still flying, it's hard for anyone to pack up and go home.

I'm starting to learn something about poaching. Everyone's heard of game violators that break fences, shoot cattle, or spotlight deer. It's easy to condemn those men who take a whiskey bottle into the field with them, or hunt from roads inside their trucks. But there's another kind of violator that is harder to judge. They are among those who live to hunt; the kind of men who scout weeks before the season opens, and can lead you blindfolded to a scrape or a buck rub deep in the woods, and who count it dishonorable to miss a shot or cripple game. More than one of them will get their trophy bucks or gobblers during the first week of hunting season, and their limit of doves within the first 30 minutes of each hunting day. They're among the best. They *see* more game, pure and simple—because they've worked at it. But once they get their limit, the law tells them that their hunting for the year or for the day is over. And they can't bear that thought. Because, their lives don't mean a heckuva lot without hunting. So they'll keep on hunting the rest of the season until they get caught. They figure it's worth it.

Well, I don't. They're risking their names and reputations because they can't control that very desire that makes them skilled as hunters. Because, whether or not they believe in them, they are breaking the laws that were made in the best interests of the wildlife and the people of this state. I can't help but call that pure and simple selfishness. And that makes me angry. A great hunter should act with more dignity.

The problem is, the human being can rationalize anything. And fiercely independent, self-sufficient hunters believe what they want to believe, and can be more hard-headed than the worst bird-eating pointer or duck-loving Chesapeake Bay retriever. So they rationalize their behavior with the argument that turkey and deer are plentiful these days, and besides, they're just getting their wife's or their son's limit. They have decided that since they are superior at what they do, they deserve special treatment.

But, they sure aren't acting like it. Instead of storming Commission meetings, demanding answers to their questions about regulations, bag limits, and special seasons, they simply act dishonorably. They slink through the woods, and by association, link themselves with their beer drinking, road hunting buddies who are the true violators of our wilderness.

I always expected more greatness of spirit from a skilled hunter. I guess I was wrong.

A handwritten signature in cursive ink that reads "Virginia Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries". The signature is fluid and appears to be written in black ink on a light-colored background.

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# October Issue

Volume 47, Number 10

A good dog, a good gun, and a place full of hidden birds. What could be better? Read about how Brittanies hold their own as top-notch bird dogs. Flip to page 5; photo by Joel Vance.

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## Cover

Ruffed grouse; photo by Gregory K. Scott

Back cover: Tucker, an exceptional Labrador retriever; photo by Cindie Brunner



**T**here are certain gunning traditions that the wise man does not tamper with. But no one ever accused me of being wise. One such accepted convention is that ruffed grouse are sagacious game birds, fond of fooling hunters. I say to that: "Meadow muffins!" Grouse are bird-brained creatures who do most of what they do out of sheer panic, created by low intelligence.

Before I am seriously injured by large men wearing Ruffed Grouse Society caps and threatening expressions, let me hasten to add that just because grouse are dumb doesn't mean they aren't great game birds. I just refuse to concede that something with a brain the size of a gnat's kneecap can outthink me, even though they have proved many times they can out-instinct me.

But when you read the literature of grousing, you nearly need an insulin shot to counteract the sugary prose. You'd think grouse spend their waking hours in tiny bunkers that resemble the Strategic Air Command Tactical Headquarters.

"Unidentified blip on Dew radar!" booms an overhead speaker, and the resident grouse crowd around a master display console to chart the course of this USO (Unidenitifed Stumbling Object), while in the background, busy little hens in trim brown uniforms push positions markers around a strategy board. This simply is not so. Grouse spend their hours in aimless activity unless disturbed.

Grouse generally get up late enough to avoid the morning dew because, in common with me, they don't like to get their feet wet. Unlike, me, however, they usually manage to stay dry while I submerge my boots at least once during every hunt.

After a grouse yawns a couple of times, checks the sky for winged death—hawks or owls, it wanders around its limited range without purpose, like a bag lady mindlessly prowlng for silk purses which she will turn into sow's ears.

Sometimes a grouse will flutter up and nip a bud or catkin off a delectable plant. Grouse are alleged to be so specific in their food habits that they are reluctant to adapt to places without just the right kind of food. Of course, you can paw through a grouse's crop and find it jammed with clover—which grows everywhere.



# Fool Birds

Authors often give grouse credit for having lots of smarts. This author, however, argues that it is rather a brainless luck that keeps grouse alive.

by Joel M. Vance

Opposite: The ruffed grouse; photo by Steve Maslowski.

Chances are, grouse are like you and me. If a steak is around, will we settle for a liver cheese sandwich? On the other hand, no steak and a powerful hunger makes liver cheese sound pretty

good.

Our grouse likes to hang around sprouty stuff because that's where he'll find much to snack on—low-growing plants with buds or perhaps berries and other fruits. A small clearcut full of wild grapes and briar quickly becomes Grouse Heaven.

Our grouse wanders around the edge of a clearcut, his bright little eye looking intelligent, as if he were thinking. But we know this is a sham. He may look at a juicy clover leaf, but he doesn't think "food." His stomach growls a bit and he responds by nipping it off and storing it in his crop.

Wait! He hears a sound in the distance! What is that? Of course, he doesn't think that—but you do, so I'll tell you. It is the sound of a wet boot being pulled out of a hidden bog hole. And that is . . . guess who? Right! Me, out grouse hunting.

I'm carrying an L.C. Smith double-barreled shotgun, 16-gauge, with No. 7½ shot in one-ounce loads. My barrels are bored improved cylinder and modified. They are 26 inches long and the gun weighs about six pounds.

This is the perfect grouse gun.

I am wearing the perfect grouse uniform also. Topping it is a hunter orange cap with the emblem of the Ruffed Grouse Society on it. This allows me to go to the RGS dinner each year and spend hundreds of dollars on raffle tickets that make wonderful fire starters after the lovely shotgun and the Brittany pup have been won by everybody else.

Below that is a capacious shell vest with a small game pocket. Most vests are built the other way, but I have my priorities straight—a lot of shells for a little game. This vest also is hunter orange, so that my hunting partners can see me as I stumble through the woods and not think I am a flushing grouse. And, the shell vest has a Ruffed Grouse Society patch sewn on, because I believe in what they do, even if I never win any of their drawings, and because I want others to ask, "What's this Ruffled Grouse thing?" so I can tell

them about it and maybe get them to put their money where their hearts are.

Pinned to the front of this same vest is a small compass which helps me figure out the approximate direction of the north pole when I am totally lost. This is of some value when my car is parked at the north pole; of little value any other time.

I carry a pocketful of caramels, some for me, some for my dog. I also carry a couple of packages of high-energy dog food to stoke the dog at midday.

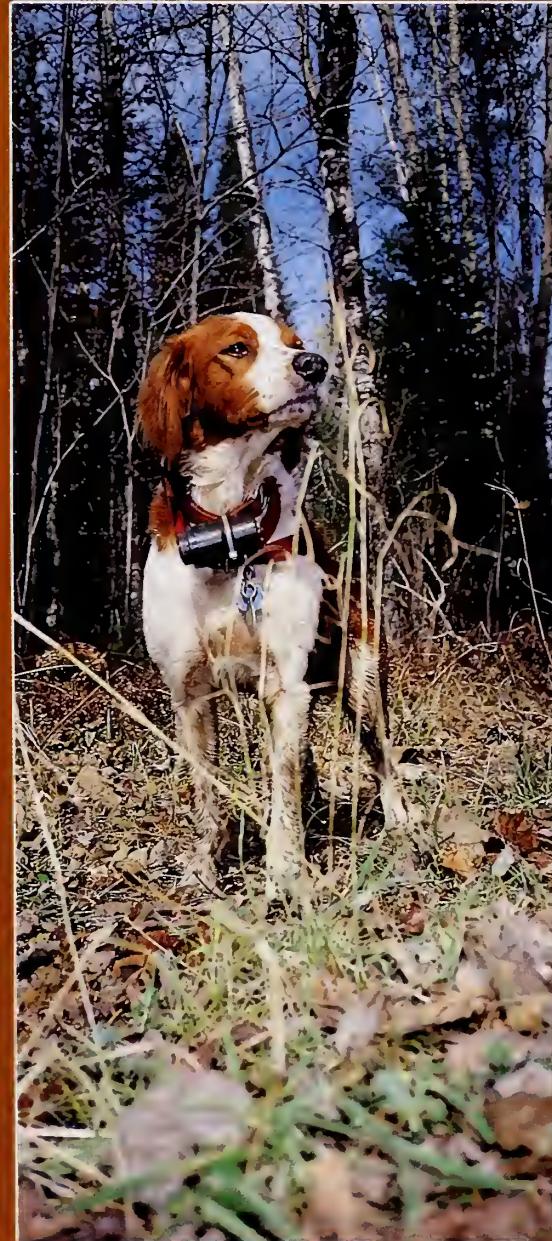
If it's cold, I wear a down vest under a windbreaker (hunter orange) and if it's too cold for that, I stay home and read wonderful old Burton Spiller stories about grouse hunting.

Our grouse, by this time, is in a mild state of panic. He hears a Space Age signal from what appears to be Trouble. Anything he doesn't understand is Trouble, and since he doesn't understand anything, everything is Trouble. The signal is from the Tracker collar worn by my faithful French Brittany, McGuffin. The Tracker collar was invented by Dave Lunn, an intense Minnesotan who seriously worries about the effect the thing might have on bird populations.

Since I don't agree that it will have that much impact, I'll tell you about it. The Tracker unit is cylindrical, about an inch-and-a-half in diameter and three inches long, and weighs maybe four ounces. It uses a 9-volt transistor radio battery. As the dog moves, the signal unit emits an irregular "beeping" sound. So far, nothing different than what a bell would do. Ah, but when the dog goes on point and the bell would have gone silent, the tracker emits a steady signal that leads you to the dog and the game bird presumably perched on the end of his talented nose.

Our grouse hears this weird sound coming closer, along with the muttered curses of some large animal that isn't a moose, deer or bear. All this equals danger, and the grouse does what grouse always do in dangerous situations. It panics.

First, its brain (such as it is) locks tight, paralyzing the bird totally. It wouldn't know a catkin from a Boykin at this juncture. I once threw sticks,





Left: McGuffin displays a tracker collar designed to locate that elusive dog on point. Above: McGuffin in search of grouse; photos by Joel Vance



by actual count, at a perching grouse who had gone into Brainlock. It wouldn't fly because it literally had forgotten how. It was a victim of its own rocklike dopeness.

Several things can happen from this point on. The least likely is that the grouse will sit there and be pointed by my Brittany. Another possibility is that its frozen skull will thaw and the bird will wild flush 75 yards ahead of the gun.

Or it may walk off, operating on the theory that if it pretends there isn't any big hairy beeping thing, there won't be.

Or it could wait with resigned terror until you have walked past it, then fall off the limb it was perched on and, acting only instinctively, of course, fly off.

Grouse of legend always put a tree between you and them instantly and this is regarded as proof of their sagacity. Actually, they are trying to fly into the tree and simply miss it because they are such poor flyers.

McGuffin, the Wonder Dog, smells Grouse Fear and immediately points. He is not a picture pointer. He squints his eyes and whuffs his mouth as if he were downwind of a hog lot in August. The more offended he looks, the closer he is to the bird.

I close in on the dog and the grouse wastes much of its escape energy creating the noisy thunder that is supposed to discombobulate predators and make them miss.

Of course, I totally ignore this stupid ploy, but somehow send my first charge into a six-inch diameter tree which has leaped in front of the gun at the instant of firing. Not to worry. I have a second barrel. The grouse is straightaway, big as a barrage balloon. A four-year-old child could hit this shot.

Unfortunately, I did not bring one along.

The grouse, with the incredible luck of the very stupid, flies across the face of the sun, and I am blinded.

But, like I said, grouse are stupid. They are the Inspectors Clouseau of the bird world—saved from extinction only by their incredible luck. □

Joel M. Vance is the news writer for the Missouri Department of Conservation.



# Honest-To-Goodness

## *Snipe*

*You won't be left in  
the dark holding an  
empty sack and a  
flashlight when you  
hunt for the real  
thing.*

*by Bob Gooch  
photos by Charles Schwartz*

*Left: That tiny game bird, the common snipe (Capella gallinago).*

**A**sk a friend to join you on a snipe hunt and you have to be careful how you phrase the invitation. Even then you may get a knowing grin and a polite decline. The image of an age-old practical joke lingers.

Is that the reason the snipe is not particularly popular as a game bird? If so, it is unfortunate, for snipe hunting can be much more than leaving a naive friend standing in the dark with an empty sack. The snipe is reasonably abundant in Virginia, but few hunters take it seriously. Most are bagged as the by-product of a hunt for some other more popular game, like waterfowl, grouse or quail. Even rabbit hunters occasionally kick up a snipe and drop it with a light load of sixes. It becomes a bonus in the game bag.

Known scientifically as *Capella gallinago*, the common snipe is also called English snipe, jacksnipe, snipe, and Wilson's snipe, and is often confused with the woodcock because of its long bill. Like the woodcock, it uses its bill for probing the soft earth for food. Recognize this and you may be a step closer toward becoming a snipe hun-

ter. Jim Clark, Jim Hallissy and I were hunting geese one cold January day. Clark had some field blinds in the flat farming country that stretches west from Back Bay, but except for a brief stretch of early morning activity it was a dead day—and *cold*. Finally when I felt I could stand it no longer, I suggested we try something else.

"How about snipe?" I asked. "The season's open through the month."

Jim appeared interested—maybe because he too wanted to leave the cold and now unproductive goose blind. "Believe I can find some," he said. "The marsh was full of them the other day."

Swapping heavy goose guns for lighter shotguns and pulling on hip boots, we waded expectantly into the marshes along the western shores of the big bay. The going was relatively easy for the simple reason that the marshes were frozen hard. We flushed a couple of birds, both out of range, but that was it. Jim shook his head in disbelief.

Our problem, of course, was the frozen marsh. There was no way the birds could probe that rich, black earth with their long bills. For the moment,

at least, they had gone elsewhere.

The snipe is a small bird, averaging a bit over four ounces, a couple of ounces lighter than the woodcock. It has a short tail that is more squared than that of the woodcock. Its head is striped fore and aft, and its back and the top of its wings are streaked brown, or sometimes almost gray. Its breast is spotted and its white belly contrasts with the orange-brown belly of the woodcock. Only the snipe's tail has a bit of orange or brown. Laid side-by-side, the differences in the two birds become obvious. When flushed from a bog or marsh, however, there is room for confusion.

I've bagged a few snipe as well as woodcock in Virginia's fields, marshes and woods, but rarely have I been ideally armed for the little birds. When I take one that is winging over my waterfowl blind, I feel like I'm shooting sparrows with an elephant gun. A 12-gauge, full-choke shotgun with a 30-inch barrel and 3-inch magnum loads is obviously too much gun. Still, just about any light shotgun with an improved cylinder or modified choke and light number 8 field loads is an acceptable combination for snipe hunt-

ing. The gun and load should produce a wide, dense pattern. You don't want holes in that pattern for a small game bird to slip through.

Although often referred to as shorebird, the snipe is often found far from large bodies of water, but even then the going is usually wet. And, as is so often the case, the best snipe shooting I've had came more or less by accident. I was visiting a friend's hunt club on Knotts Island one fine December day, and when we rounded a bend in the narrow road that led to the club, we found the caretaker seemingly busy in a scraggly field across the road from the clubhouse. I hadn't noticed he was carrying a gun until he suddenly swung on a bird winging over his head, followed it for a moment, and then touched off a booming shot. The bird faltered in its erratic flight, folded, and tumbled into the weeds. A winter flight of snipe was passing through the area, and the club manager couldn't resist the chance for some unusual wingshooting.

Neither could I.

I borrowed a pair of ill-fitting boots, a gun too heavy for the job, and a handful of shotgun shells—also too heavy. Suddenly I was smack-dab in the middle of a heavy snipe migration. The birds seemed to be everywhere. When one wasn't flushing ahead of me, one or two were winging over my head—a rare combination of jump and pass shooting. I missed a couple of easy shots, but then began to connect, only to quickly run through my sparse supply of ammunition.

I learned a lot about snipe, snipe hunting, and snipe shooting that winter afternoon. In fact I had never been in such an abundance of snipe—nor have I been since. It served, however, to point out the possibilities this neglected little game bird offers.

I missed some easy shots that day on Knotts Island, and I've missed snipe winging over my waterfowl blind—much to the amusement of my hunting companions. The snipe is not a tough target, but rarely is it an easy one. Its small size makes it deceiving. The newcomer to snipe hunting will think the birds are much farther away than they actually are. Add the twisting, zigzagging flight that characterizes the first 10



Although related, the American woodcock (*Philohela minor*) differs from the common snipe in size, coloration and length of tail.

yards or so of its flight, and you have a challenging shot. Usually, however, the bird will level off and fly a straighter course long before it gets out of range. The trick is to wait, something the snapshooting grouse or quail hunter has trouble doing.

Part of the answer to good hunting is to walk the bogs or other wet places with the wind to your back. Snipe like to flush into the wind, and when they do, they fly across or into it. If you miss a bird, continue your hunt, but plan to return to that spot. Snipe frequently return to the area from which they are flushed—probably because the feeding is good or they like the area for a resting place.

One approach to hunting is simply to walk the boggy areas, gun at the ready, and wait out the bird's initial burst of speed before shooting. A pair of hunters can walk opposite sides of a bog or swale, but the one on the wind-

ward side will get most of the shooting. Another method is for a pair of hunters to take turns driving and shooting with the shooter standing in front of the nearest water or break in the trees. Snipe tend to fly low and they seek openings in the trees. In the absence of trees they will usually head for water.

The snipe likes bogs, marshes, and wet meadows, but unlike the woodcock, is seldom found in the woodlands. It prefers open country, feeding on crustaceans and insects in the wet soil.

As Jim Clark, Jim Hallissy and I learned that cold winter day in that Back Bay marsh, the best-looking habitat may be void of birds—even though they were there last week. Like the woodcock, the snipe travels south a jump or two ahead of the freeze, and it often flies at night. Occasionally some lucky hunter catches a day flight under cloudy conditions, and enjoys some rare wingshooting.

Knowing when to expect the migrations helps. It usually comes around the middle of November in Virginia, though some flights might not wing into the state before December. Serious snipe hunters, few though they may be, listen for the weather reports from the north just as do others who seek the migratory birds.

The Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries usually sets the snipe season in July or August at the same time it sets the seasons on doves, rails, and woodcock. The Commission works within the broad framework established by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and a typical snipe season is a long one, opening in mid-October and running through January.

Even during the peak of the migration, you do not often flush snipe in flocks. Usually, it's a bird or two at the time—and that's good wingshooting.

Listen carefully the next time someone asks you to go snipe hunting. Don't be too quick to call his bluff. You just might be in for the best hunting of the season. □

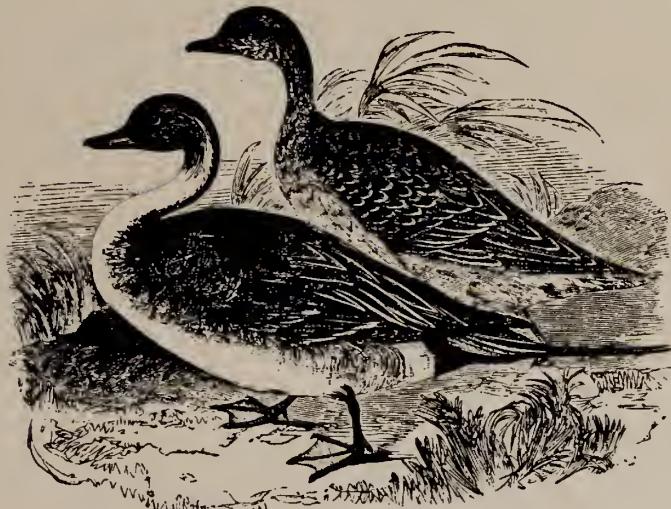
Bob Gooch lives and works in Troy, Virginia. A member of the Virginia Outdoor Writers Association and the Outdoor Writers Association of America, Bob is a regular contributor to major outdoor publications.

The "good old days" of hunting in Virginia

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# 148 Foules Killed at Three Shootes

by Lyle Browning



Getting up in the early morning to hunt was a rite of passage for most young people when I was growing up. I was one of the lucky ones who could roll out of bed and amble off to the other end of the farm to hunt, so my preparation time was less than most. On the way, I picked up arrowheads in the fields and wondered about how they were used, how old they were, and how people hunted without a trusty Ithaca pump. Later, after years of work in archaeology, I was presented with an opportunity to try what was probably one of the first hunting methods. On an excavation in the Orkney Islands off the north coast of Scotland, I saw a raft of ducks just offshore. Not having had a duck dinner in ages, I picked up a rock and heaved it at what appeared to be a solid mass of dinners sitting on the water. The ducks watched the rock skip by and said nothing. I threw

This 1587 rendition illustrates (in the background) one Indian method of hunting. Notice the artistic license of depicting Indians who are a trifle underclothed for a winter's day on the water. Whether ducks and geese would allow a boatload of men into bow range is also a matter of speculation. Perhaps the lack of gunfire made for less wary game; illustration from *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*, by Thomas Harriot.



another with the same result. Followed by an estimated 398 more, one took pity and moved itself into the path of the rock. The dinner was excellent, but my colleagues remarked that I was living proof that ancient man did not expend the calories that I had without becoming extinct in the process. There had to be an easier way to harvest food.

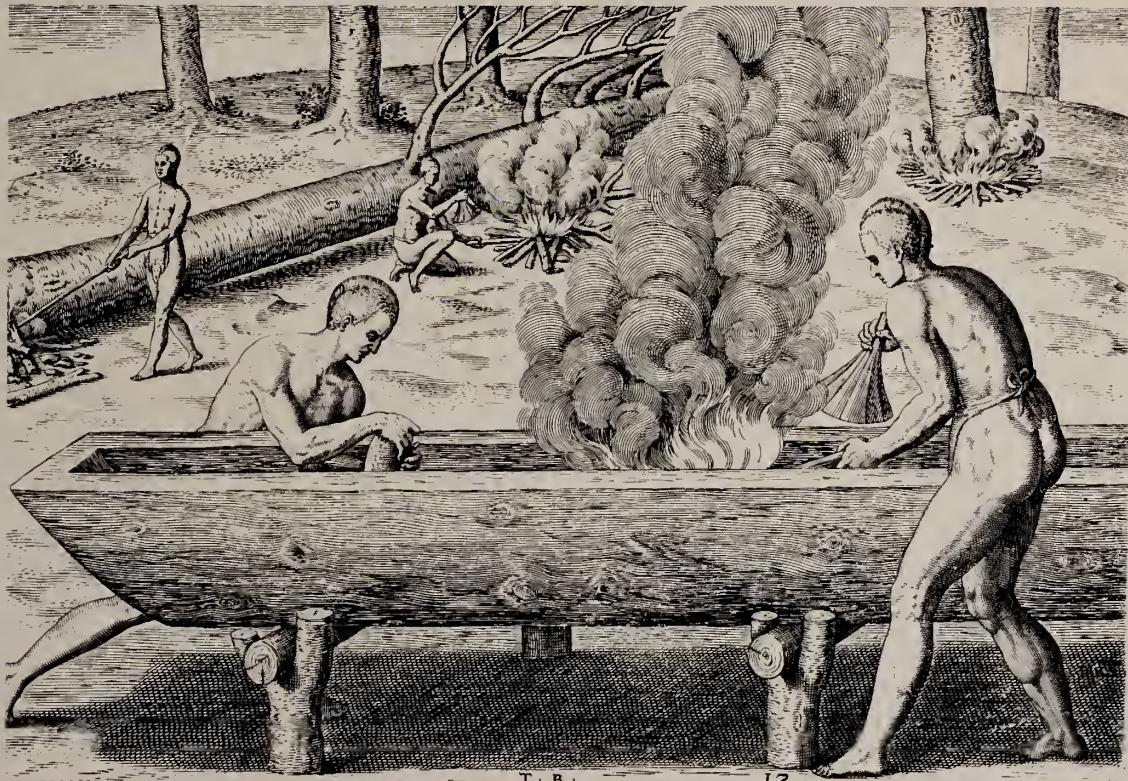
In the practice of archaeology I constantly dig up reminders of the ways our ancestors used to hunt way back when. Way back when in Virginia means anything from 10,000 B.C. to the early 20th century. It is only when we archaeologists look at the people

who left their traces that we begin to glimpse what life was like in the past. For example, hunting ducks from whenever to 1607 to the American Revolution was done roughly the same as it is now: You go out and shoot 'em. But it's when you look at the intervening steps that you get a rough idea of what it was like to hunt in those days.

We haven't always had it so good. Today, you sit in your insulated house with central heat, electric light, indoor plumbing and all of the other necessities of modern life, going over the gun and the ammunition, finding the clothes, boots, etc. for this one day in

the field. You go to bed, and when the alarm goes off, you're up and off to the shower and the coffeemaker or whatever you use to revive you at the ungodly hour you've chosen. You microwave some breakfast, pull on the insulated underwear, insulated socks and boots, all designed to provide maximum warmth and minimum weight. You pull on the Gore-Tex jacket (if you're upscale) and the other waterproofing, put the dog into the vehicle, hitch up the boat and drive off. You meet your buddies, launch the boat, start the motor and zoom off to the blind. In your hand is a shotgun hold-

Without iron tools, the Indians were forced to use their ingenuity when it came to building their dugout canoes for hunting. They would first select a suitable tree, then build a fire under it to bring it down. After that they began burning and scraping the tree with shell utensils until it reached the correct dimensions; illustration from *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*, by Thomas Harriot.



ing three shells. It will fire in any sort of weather and the most work you've got to do is to put another shell into the magazine. Then it's up to your skills as a hunter and marksman to bring in the ducks for the dog to retrieve.

In 1626, life was a bit more basic. Your gun was always with you because it was constantly needed. Only four years before, the Indians decided that you had trespassed upon their lands enough and that the better Englishman was better dead. Your house was wooden, drafty, with a dirt floor, no insulation, a clay chimney, a bed if you were well-off, but more probably it

had a straw mattress with plenty of bugs that saw you as a movable feast, and indoor plumbing of the thunderjar sort. Apart from what the fireplace provided in heat, the outside temperature was pretty much the inside temperature, too. You probably slept in your clothing, this being still pretty much in the age when taking a bath twice a year made you a candidate for a clean freak. No alarm clock got you up, but you could count on the outhouse seat doing what the coffee does now to awaken you. Another hundred years later, William Byrd II would record that the coffee he had while out on one

of his innumerable jaunts was nearly strong enough to give him palsy. All your clothes were natural materials and not lightweight. Waterproofing was a matter of layers, each adding more weight. By the time you added the clothes and the hunting gear to the base weight, you'd have a good-sized backpack weight to lug around. The dog probably wasn't too happy about having to get out of his master's bed nor were the other animals known to share the quarters.

How did you do it 126 years before there were any bearded folk about? Then, your weapon was a bow and

In 1697, netting ducks was an acceptable method of "hunting," along with the familiar use of a hunting spaniel; illustration courtesy of the Virginia State Library.



arrow, or a net. Your house was a small affair, made of saplings and covered with mats. With a little fire in the middle to keep you warm, the house had to be small enough for the fire to keep the temperature up. Available descriptions indicate that these houses were toasty warm, if a bit smoky. A couple of thousand years of practice meant an optimized living based entirely on materials at hand. Your clothes were natural materials, but not cumbersome, fashion being limited. No outhouse to awaken you.

Nowadays, a shotgun is a relatively lightweight item, with room for three

shells. An English publication of 1697 describes the gun then in vogue as ". . . That is ever esteemed the best fowling piece which hath the longest barrel, being five foot and a half or six foot long, with an indifferent bore, under Harquebus." In 1626, you had your choice of a few pieces, the most advanced having flintlock firing mechanisms, the others with a wick which had to be kept lit. Imagine that little chore in a driving rain. Though the bore size of the gun was not as large as the 4 gauge punt guns of the 19th and 20th century, they were still large—large enough to kill lots of ducks.

Writers of the early descriptions of Virginia, whether of the propagandized tracts designed to promote immigration to a place just short of paradise or the personal letter sort, all described Virginia as having ducks and geese *without number*. Thus, the early Virginians went for quantity when they hunted, and the more stuff that could be packed into the barrels of their guns, the better. Stuff is the correct word, since lead shot was not the only item going into the barrel. Gravel, pieces of iron, in fact, anything which could be dumped down the thing, was.

Anthony Bagnall, a chirurgeon (sur-

geon), wrote in 1608 of killing 148 ducks with 3 shots on a hunt. Kills of that size apparently were not that unusual. But his description of three shots can be misleading. Three shots meant three separate instances of loading, aiming, and firing a gun which was so heavy that it needed a stand to support it. On the bright side, the ducks probably never moved, not having seen too many hunters with guns before.

Which brings us to another little milepost in the imagination. Could those men hunt in a driving rain? The answers aren't all in, but logically, keeping the powder dry was the problem. Wet powder meant no explosion of powder, and no explosion meant no ducks. So, the 1626 hunter probably kept warm with the dog back in the straw bed when the rain was coming down.

One assumes that the 1626 hunter walked or rode his horse to the water. But after that, a boat was needed. A reference to 1781 mentions ducking boats with three man crews. While today, a river is often viewed as an impediment to travel, earlier in time it was the interstate and international highway, with boat traffic as prevalent as tractor trailer trucks on highways today. But the boats were heavy, wooden and had to be rowed out to the hunting area. Of course the rowing kept you warm on the way.

If you were an Indian, and decided to build a boat, you started with a large tree, chopped it down, shaped the ends and built fires in the middle to hollow it out. The end result was the dug-out canoe, heavy as you might think and definitely a team effort. Variations on these were still in use in the Dismal Swamp area into the 1950's by trappers and rivermen. Very difficult and time consuming, but at least they didn't leak.

Hunting was a necessity for survival for the early Virginians and they simply had to endure the hardships of cumbersome boats, weapons and drafty shelter—or die. However, since the colonists were Englishmen, they clung

## " . . . the hunting of Indians was regulated more closely than wildfowl."

to some of the traditional British beliefs regarding hunting and fishing, even if they hindered, rather than helped their odds for survival. In England, hunting and fishing were, as they are now, a matter for the nobility and gentlemen of the upper and middle classes. Even today in England, you rent a specific little patch of riverside from which you can fish. And you cannot fish from any other patch.

**S**o, in English America, in the prohibitions against trespass, the landowner who owned six slaves could pursue game on another's land "without lycence." Others had to have the landowner's permission to pursue game. However, for the vast majority of the population who didn't own six slaves, hunting was still a necessity. One hunted on one's own land, or on land for which permission had been obtained or on government land. Nothing different from today on that score.

A quick look through the laws shows that during the 17th and 18th centuries, there was little if any regulation on the number of waterfowl allowed, the way in which they were obtained, or any of the other rules and regulations which govern us. In fact, the hunting of Indians was regulated more closely than wildfowl. Even before the Indian-initiated wars of 1622 and 1644, the possession of guns by Indians, the sale of guns to Indians and, the teaching of shooting to Indians was punishable by death. That harsh stricture ended in 1663 with life servitude substituted for death.

For those who lived on the water, hunting gradually became a matter of economics, developing into the commercial hunting of the 19th and 20th

centuries. Captain Belch, Doc Ed and Doc Trent Wilson talked about the disgust of hunters in the early 20th century when bag limits were lowered to somewhere around 25. These were men for whom duck hunting was as much economics as ritual, and certainly the primary focus of life. And, as such, how you hunted waterfowl was not of concern to them. Baiting was a necessity. Assuredly, netting at that time was not used to check banding for waterfowl distribution patterns! Waterfowl were hunted from land and from water. Spaniels were commonly used for retrieving until the Labrador and Chesapeake Bay retrievers were introduced and developed later. In short, the market hunters of the late 19th and early 20th centuries with punt guns, and large boats displaying ducks heaped in the middle were, no doubt, simply carrying on a tradition started in the 17th and 18th centuries.

In looking back, the line of evolution appears to run from hunting as a matter of survival to hunting as a matter of pleasure. The Indians hunted to live, killing within their means, limited by weapons that were not capable of mass destruction and by their ability to preserve game. The early settlers also began that way, but their technology quickly evolved to the point where they were able to bypass survival in favor of economics. When needed game regulations forced market hunting backstage, the present mode of hunting developed.

The old commercial hunters might well not think that much of us. We're back where the Indians started in their world view, though we go out there with our vastly improved technology, far warmer, drier, and safer than either the Indian or the early settler. Even so, cocooned by our technology, the real enjoyment has come to be in the doing, the being out there, not in the shooting. Powhatan would smile and think that we were learning something at long last. □

Lyle Browning is the editor of the *Quarterly Bulletin of the Archeological Society of Virginia*, and lives in Richmond.





# Bird-Lovin' Brits

The Brittany spaniel is a hardworking bird-loving hunting dog—and an irreplaceable friend in the field.

by Joel M. Vance

**T**hey sprawl all over the room, soaking in heat from the fire, burr-tangled fuzzballs twitching from phantom hunts.

Each twitch shakes loose a few beggar's ticks, the flat seeds of beggarweed with the Velcro surface. They're superb quail food, but if you deposit them on your hostess's Chippendale, you'll be every bit as welcome with her as facial blemishes on Miss America.

I'm unashamedly in love with Brittanies. A friend says he can't quite trust anything with a red nose, which means I guess that he and Santa Claus aren't getting along, but the red nose is found only on the American Brittanies—my French dogs have cute little black noses. In fact, my son's French Brit, Pepper, is as black all over as a Labrador retriever. She'd be drummed out of the American Kennel Club if she were an American Brit, but such color variations not only are encouraged among the French dogs, but actually bring a premium price.

The summary of the French breed standard could have been written

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A Brittany on the run—to a bird, of course.

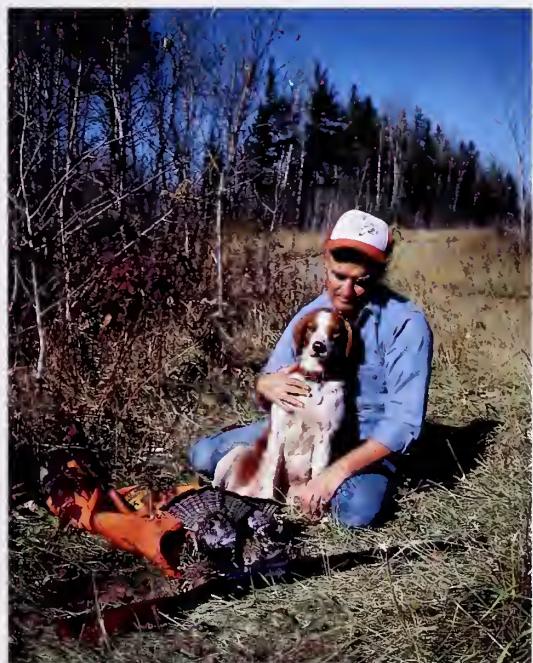
# Bird-Lovin' Brits





A French Brittany  
can't be beat in his  
love for the field—  
and his hunting  
partner.

photos by Joel Vance.



by someone looking at Guff: "Thickset and strong-backed. An elegant little dog, very vigorous in its movements, energetic, with an intelligent look, presenting the appearance of a full-blooded dog."

Ginger is our best bird dog, but Guff and Pepper are unparalleled when it comes to aggressive desire. If guts and wish could make it so, they'd win the Grand National, one-two.

Brittanies have picked up a bum rap as close-working dogs. I would have put Ginger in her youthful prime against any chert-headed pointer who ever slipped the leash and headed over the hill, not to be seen again until feeding time.

Once I took her to South Dakota and when I let her out of the car at the fringe of the 115,000-acre Ft. Pierre National Grassland, her eyes got big and she started looking herself over to see whether she had died and gone to Heaven. Distant jackrabbits perked their ears and swallowed uneasily, for one of their peers was afoot. There was a swooshing roar, and Ginger vanished, a dusty blur headed for the horizon. Occasionally I would see a tiny speck at the ridgeline which I surmised to be either Ginger or a sprinting antelope.

Close working? Sure—like a cruise missile.

It was only about 20 years ago that I started hearing about Brittanies, though they've been around for many years. When I made the decision to have my own bird dogs, I went with what, at that time, was an unfamiliar breed. Why a Brittany? Because it is a natural pointer with a strong retrieving instinct, loves to hunt dead . . . and simply cannot be spoiled as a hunting dog by giving it hugs and kisses.

Brittanies are among the most affectionate dogs extant, consummate ear-lickers who can adore you with their eyes until you get embarrassed. Try hugging the average rock-ribbed pointer and you'll be lucky if you don't get stone bruises. On the other hand, maybe there's something to be said for dogs who function efficiently and don't invite love. It's less of a heart tug the day you lose them.

While Brittanies are fairly new on



*"He is a friend and associate in hunting . . . He never judges nor criticizes and he accepts my many faults without second thought. He is family."*





the American hunting scene, let me point out to pointer dogmatists that spaniels were graciously including their masters in hunting exploits long before the first pointer or setter came loping down the lane with a badly-chewed game bird halfway down its throat.

Way back in 1686, (not exactly the day before yesterday), Nicholas Cox wrote in *The Gentleman's Recreation*, "It is now the mode to shoot flying, as being by experience found the best and surest way, for when your game is on the wing it is more exposed to danger; for if but one shot hits any part of its wings so expanded, it will occasion its fall, although not to kill it, so that your spaniel will soon be its victor."

Cox never saw me shoot or he wouldn't have put in that stuff about the surest shot being a wing shot, but he was talkin' spaniel before there was such a thing as a pointer or setter.

In 1517, Dr. Johannes Caius, University of Cambridge, said, "When he (the bird dog) hath found the bird, he keepeth a sure and fast silence and stayeth his steps and will proceed no further and with close covered, watching eye layeth his belly to the ground and so creepeth forward like a worm."

Just the other day, Guff halted at a weed patch and stayethed his steps. Then, with watching eye, he layethed his belly to the ground and so creepethed forward like a worm.

It is a pretty sight to see him sleuthing carefully, a few inches at a time, until he freezes on point, his mouth whuffing as he hits a numbing fog of birdsmell.

Brittanies adjust instantly to the good life. Bring the average bird dog inside after life in a kennel and it is wary, like a Skid Row bum brought in from the alley and offered Chateau Lafite '34, a Cuban cigar and a T-bone steak. The Brittany accepts such hospitality as his due.

Okay, I suppose I have to admit that the Brittany is not perfect. My dogs have, shall we delicately say, defiled a manuscript or two, and I suppose this is critical comment, but I'd rather not think about it.

Brittanies tend to be generalists as hunters, able to hunt all birds pretty well, but probably not superlatively on

any of them. I have hunted bobwhite and scaled quail, ruffed and sharp-tailed grouse, pheasants, prairie chickens, woodcock, snipe and doves with my Brittanies and they don't even pause to shift gears. They have a Hydramatic Hunting transmission and slip seamlessly from one bird to another.

I now must confess that the modern Brittany is a created dog, a refinement of raw materials so crude that the average junkyard dog, given a few generations of selective breeding, could become a passable Brit. But what has evolved over the past 80 years is an incredibly cute dog, who also is a fine little hunter with the guts of an NFL running back. Guff can't run through brick walls after birds . . . but he'll try. Pepper recently was nearly filleted by a barbed-wire fence and she didn't even yip. She came home with a flap of hide the size of Rhode Island hanging loose, wanting to play . . . after a full day's hunt.

You may claim that such courage may actually be a lack of good sense. But Brittanies aren't too dumb to know better. They just like to hunt. I know. I asked them. Brittany intelligence is legendary.

A Brittany is not a dog to crouch in a dog box wondering what's going on outside, either. No, the Brittany is an assistant driver without whom the driver (me) is likely to run off in roadside fields and decorate trees.

He is a friend and associate in hunting. He is a warm shoulder and a sympathetic (and soft) ear when I have the blues. He never judges nor criticizes, and he accepts my many faults without second thought. He is family.

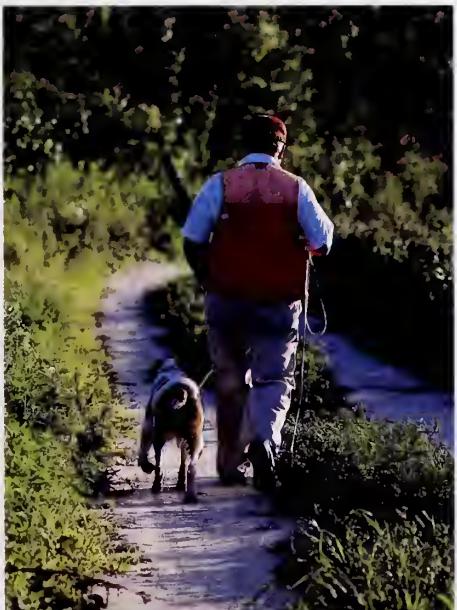
He is my friend for too short a time and when he is gone, there will be an unending ache that time can dull, but not erase.

He is here with his head on my knee, checking to make sure I say it right and don't misspell his name.

But even if I did, he would shrug and lick my ear and suggest we go hunting. His solutions for all life's problems are simple—go hunting with someone you love. □

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*Joel Vance is the news writer for the Missouri Department of Conservation.*



# Pettigrew Wildlife Management Area

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**Location:** The 933 acre area is located in the northeast section of Caroline County. The land is triangular in shape and is bounded on the southeast by U.S. 17 and on the northeast by state route 614. Route 615 bisects the area and Port Royal is approximately nine miles to the southeast.

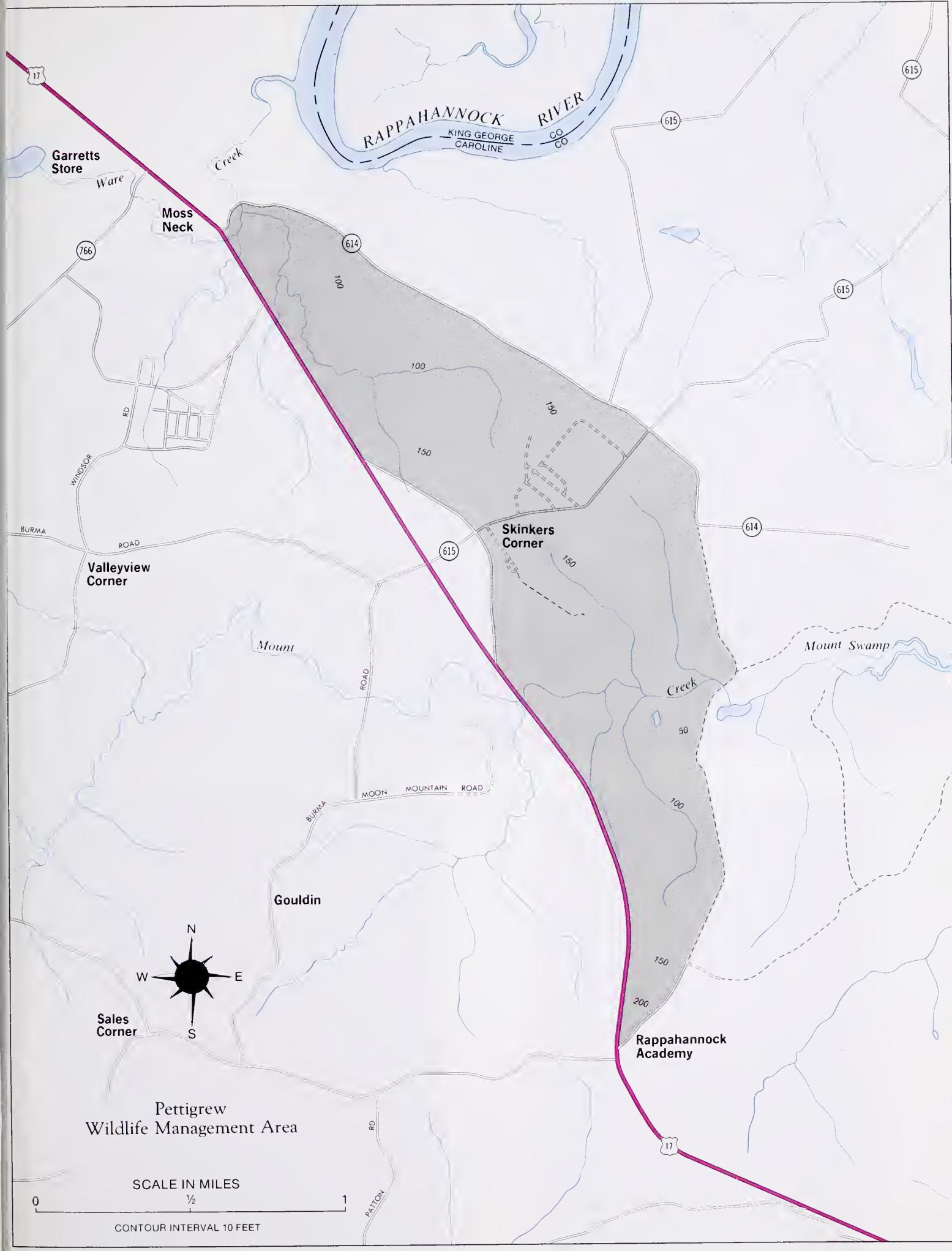
**Description:** Pettigrew was part of Fort A.P. Hill that was acquired by the government in late 1941 and 1942 by purchase in fee simple. In 1979 the Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries acquired the Pettigrew area from Fort A.P. Hill. Most of the area is underlined by unconsolidated sediment of the coastal plain. The sediments are mainly sand gravel of marine origin with some clay and marl. Soil texture ranges from silt loam to gravelly sand with large areas of fine sandy loam. Mount Creek bisects the eastern portion and contains numerous beaver impoundments. Ware Creek, which accommodates herring spawning runs, touches the northern end. The climate is generally mild with a mean average annual temperature of 56.9°. The average summer temperature is 75.8° and the average winter temperature is 37.9°. The average precipitation is 40 inches.

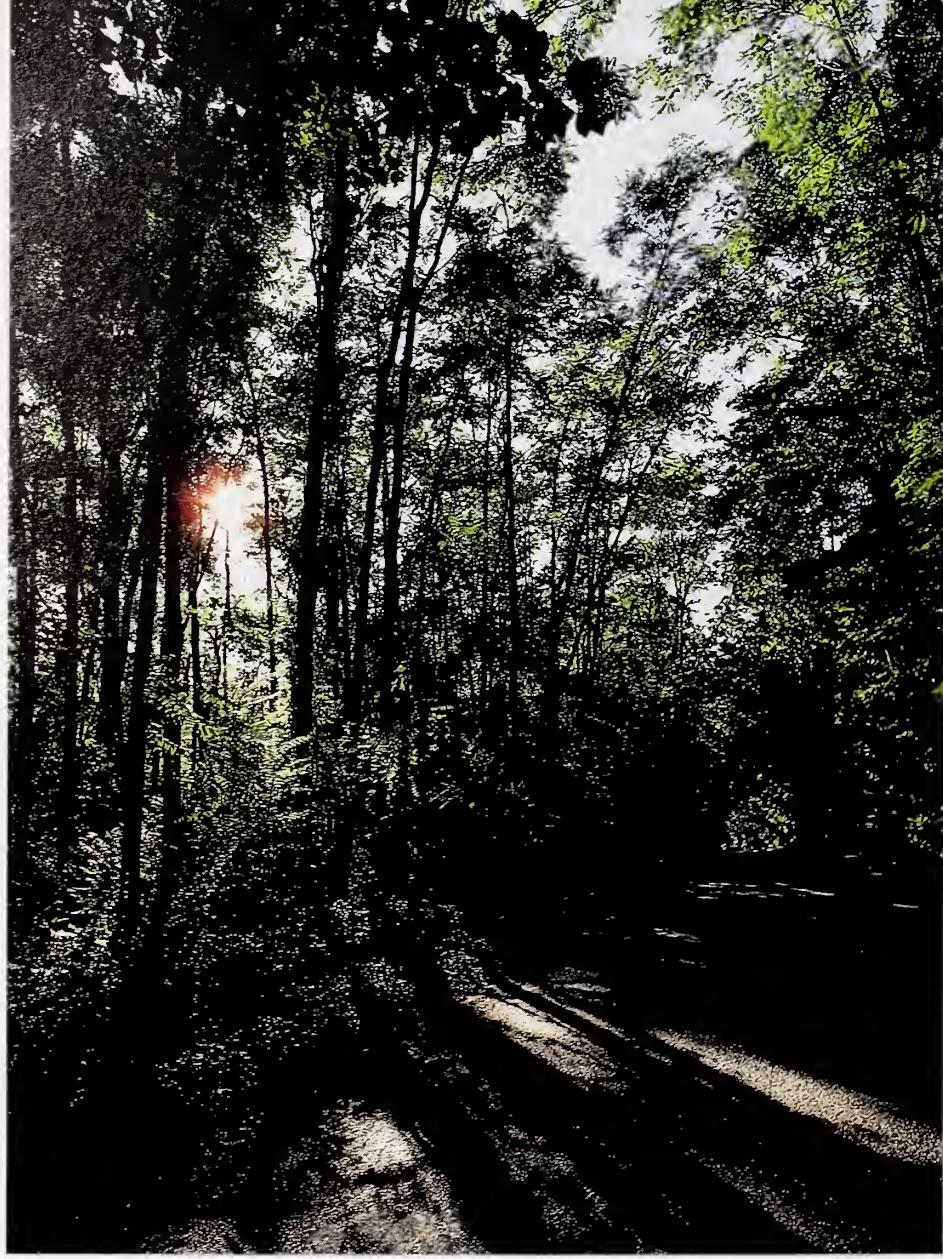
Original vegetation for the upland portion of the area was beech-oak-hickory climax. Wetlands of Mount Creek contain marsh grasses and rooted aquatic vegetation depending on the elevation. The present forest composition consists of mature hardwoods (oak-beech) and stands of loblolly or Virginia pine in small blocks. Recent open portions of the tract used as military bivouac sites were permitted to revert to stands of Virginia pine and miscellaneous vegetation such as honeysuckle, smilax, and Virginia creeper. The hardwood stands have adequate stocking with stems ranging in size from less than pulpwood size to blocks of overmature timber. Pine occurring in pure stands average pulpwood size and consist mainly of Virginia pine with some loblolly pine. Three blocks of hardwood were clearcut which resulted in brushy blocks of sprout growth. Approximately 20 acres is under cultivation.

**Hunting:** Deer, turkey and squirrels are the most sought-after game species. Other species present in small numbers are quail, dove, woodcock, and ducks. Beaver, otter, and muskrat use Mount Creek and its associated marsh. Potential for farm game species is low, due to the small acreage that is open or in agricultural lease.

**Facilities:** Parking areas are available; many of these are abandoned military training sites.

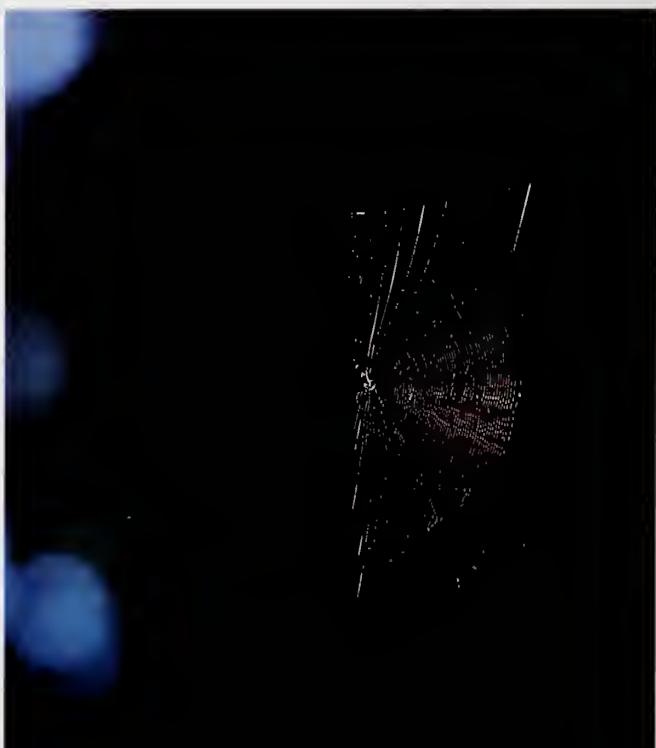
**Points of Interest:** Pettigrew is a good place, even during the off-season, for a day of hiking or bird watching. An active eagle nest has been sighted on the property. There are also a good number of wildflowers to be seen at Pettigrew, including the hard-to-find showy orchis. □



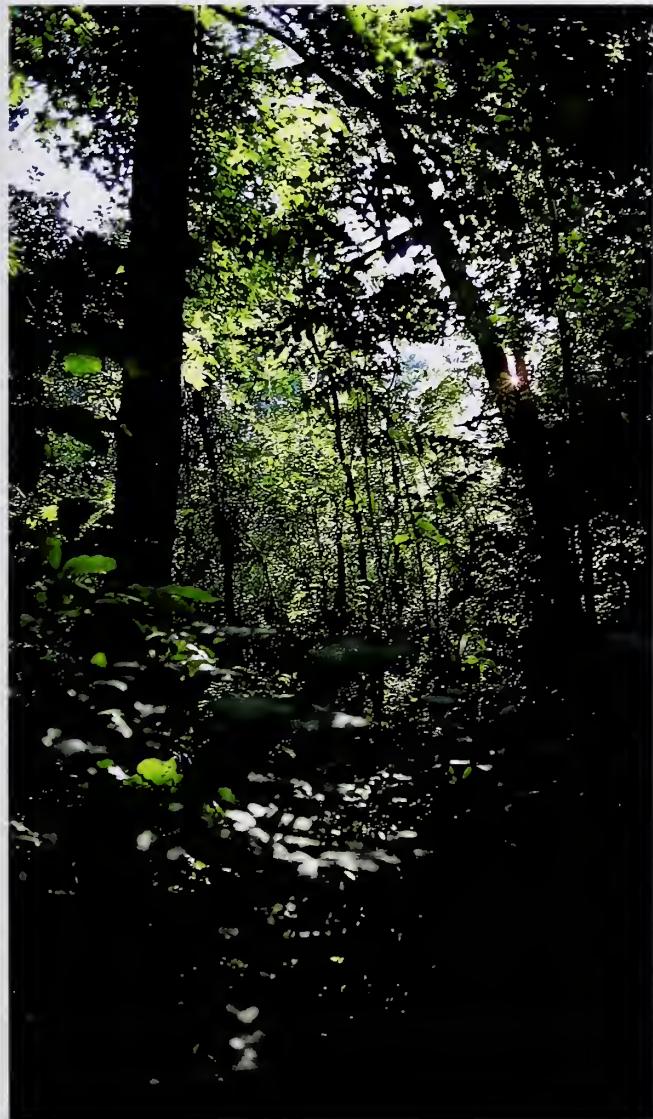


# Pettigrew Wildlife Management Area

Photos by Tim Wright



*Below and right: photos by Lynda Richardson*



*Photo by Tim Wright*





# **Standard Poodles: The Forgotten Retrievers**

**Though prized as a hunting retriever  
in Europe, the Standard poodle has never  
caught on in America as a companion in the field.**

**by Jeff Curtis**

**photos by Cindie Brunner & Jeff Curtis**

I remember the first time I saw a Standard poodle. My wife and I were driving down a country road when she saw two large, leggy dogs walking within a fenced yard. One was coal black and the other white. A definite salt and pepper team. Curiosity forced me to do a little backtracking to the residence of the two dogs. The owner, a very pleasant and talkative man, explained the Standard poodle breed, a bit of history and the dogs' present service to him as hunting companions.

That was about 10 years ago and ever since, although very rarely encountering the dogs, I've always sought out conversation with owners of this remarkable breed of retrievers.

Some of the earliest recorded history of the Standards dates back to 1554. Early Italian, Dutch and French paintings have been discovered depicting poodle-type dogs. The dogs then had less neck, more chest and a long-legged bulldog configuration. But you can see the poodle in them.

These poodle-type dogs were originally bred for retrieving work and were used in Russia, Africa, and extensively in Germany. The German dog was a larger breed and contributed to the French line most responsible for what we see in America today. So wide and aggressive was the French acceptance of this dog for field use that it soon became known as the national dog of France—a distinction still held today.

*"About 10 years ago  
a lady showed up with  
two of those dogs at  
one of our retriever  
work sessions. One  
white and the other  
black. All I know is  
that everybody laughed  
at those dogs when she  
showed up and nobody  
was laughing when  
she left."*

**Joe May  
President,  
James River  
Retriever Club**

Adverse weather and cold water conditions were the norm for the hunting demands that the Europeans expected of their dogs. And, as surprising as it is, that awful looking French show-style haircut on many of these dogs had the distinct utilitarian purpose of accommodating those terrible weather conditions. The hind-end was cut short from the rump up to the shoulder blades to allow easier movement through the water. The breast, shoulder and neck area, as well as head and knuckles, were left with longer hair to insulate body parts from the ice-cold water while making retrieves. This rather impressive hairdo, called a "Continental" or the similar "English Saddle" clip, is now considered quite an art in the dog show circuit.

Modern field appearance, however, is a more uniform cut of about two inches of hair along the entire body. Called a "Kennel" or "Sporting" clip, this grooming effort is required about every 10 weeks. Because these dogs do not shed, their hair continues to grow as much as a humans. And although requiring a bit of time on the owner's part, most people can learn to do this in the home fairly easily.

We probably owe a debt of gratitude to Madame Richenbach, who in the 1930's was operating a kennel in Switzerland. There, at the Labory Kennels, Madame was involved in a breeding program using the noted German dogs. These dogs were known for their larger size, their "elegance of

type and pride of carriage, good bone, black eyes and silver skin."

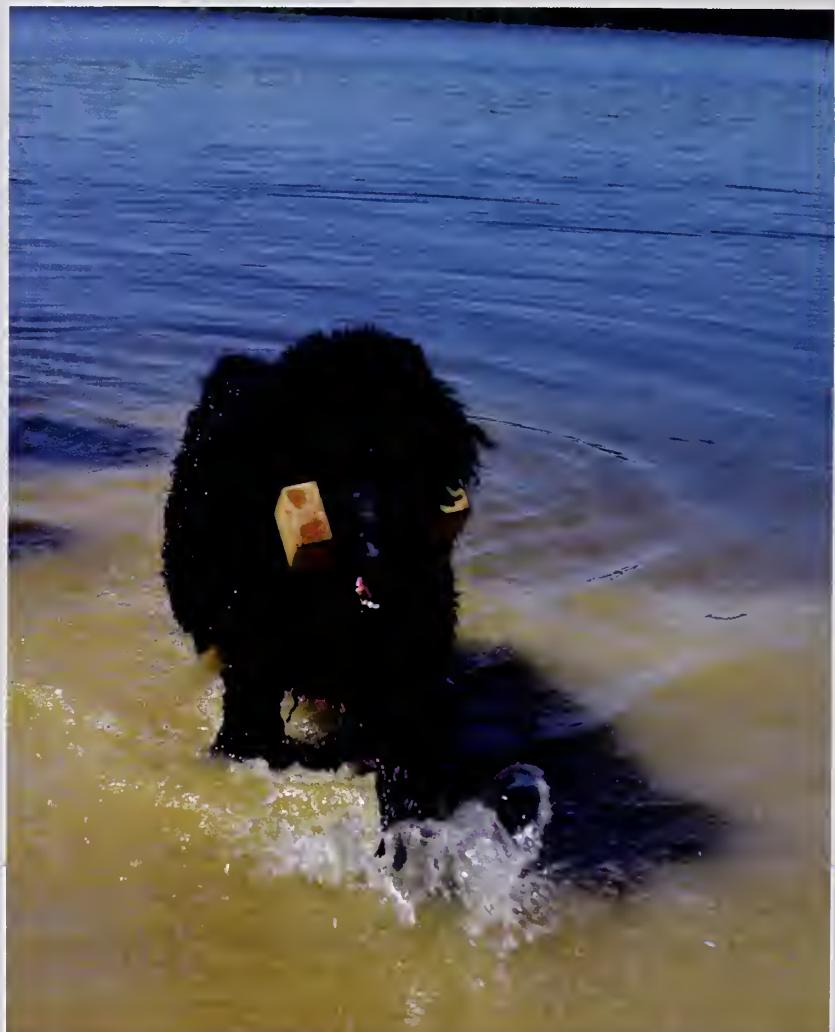
The dogs we see now, both black, white and chocolates, are direct descendants of these Labory Kennel dogs. In fact, most of the modern blacks and chocolates can be traced to the International Champion Andere von Hugelberg, who was and is still considered an excellent example of a black Standard, quality par excellence. He was, of course, one of Madame's dogs.

In Virginia, and moreover along the entire Chesapeake Bay, these dogs virtually are never used for either bird or waterfowl hunting. Instead, the Labrador, Chesapeake Bay and golden retrievers hold their own in respective popularity. Although still used extensively in France and Germany as a pheasant and duck retriever, the Standard has, for some reason, never gained popularity among this area's sportsmen.

I spoke with Mrs. Linda Youmans of Midlothian, Virginia, an ardent promoter and breeder of Standard poodles. Asked about the Standard being used as a hunting retriever, she explained that, although she maintains a waiting list for puppies, she doesn't know of anybody using the breed for other than show purposes. "Nobody's using them, and I don't know why. They're just not well-known." The fact that the Standard breed is not well-known is apparent when you try to find a puppy. As Mrs. Youmans explained, "We decided on one after our Irish died and we studied up on the breed. After that it took us five months to find a puppy." Mrs. Youmans said that even though they advertise the dogs as Standard poodles, 60 percent of her phone inquiries expect the dogs to be the miniature and toy sizes.

A Standard poodle, on the average, will mature to about 50 pounds in weight and stand 24 inches at the shoulder. It's not uncommon for 28-29 inch dogs to grace a show. They are tall, straight-legged, deep bodied dogs. Colors range from black, chocolate, tangerine to white, with only solid colors acceptable on the show circuit.

It's surprising that these strong, willing retrievers aren't used in this area. What I've seen and read about the breed show that they possess a strong,



Standard poodles are natural retrievers, and are bred for the hunting field in Europe.

inherent aptitude for both retrieving and water work as well as one of the highest learning abilities of any breed. In fact, dubbed "genius of the dog world," the standard's versatility and trainability is one reason the dogs have become synonymous with circuses and trained animal acts.

Probably no other person in the United States has worked so passionately with Standard poodles as Charles Le Boutellier of Stonewood Kennels in Brooklandville, Maryland. Le Boutellier began working with Standards back in 1941. He is the founder of the renowned Greenspring Poodle Club, which was created in the 1950s with a small group of devoted retriever enthusiasts trying to establish the poodle in field retrieving circuits. The dog was not recognized by the American Kennel Club as a retriever at the time. Undeniably, the results of the field trials showed the breed to be steady and obedient and willing to finish retrieves, not only on water and land, but in the worst of conditions: cold, gusty winds, icy mud and choppy water.

But, while discussing the idea of reinitiating Standards into the hunting circuit, Le Boutellier said, "There's nothing new about this idea. I've been working on it for years. The trouble is that only about one in a million people is interested in this aspect of the poodle."

After talking with Le Boutellier, who is also a licensed poodle judge, one gets the notion that the breeders of Standards may be the dog's own worst enemies. Much, if not all, of the attention is being given to the show aspects of the dogs: color of skin, gait, conformation and style. Even among the Greenspring Club, initially established to champion the dogs as retrievers, there was an inclination toward the popular and controversial issues. There seems to be considerable disagreement among the breeders even as to what the "official clip" should be. Some opt for the English Saddle, others for the Continental. Along with this is some dissension about training preferences and breeding programs. All in all, there's a goodly amount of conflicting opinions about the breed's mission.

## Standard Poodle Breeders

Stonewood Kennels  
Mr. Charles Le Boutellier  
Brooklandville, MD 21022  
  
Mrs. Linda Youmans  
3311 Fortunes Ridge Road  
Midlothian, Virginia 23113  
  
Gaylasna Kennels  
Route 9, Box 170  
Mechanicsville, Virginia 23111

## References

- The New Poodle*  
by Maggie Irick  
Howell Book House, Inc.  
230 Park Avenue  
New York, N.Y. 10169  
\$19.95
- The Book of the Poodle*  
by Anna Katherine Nicholas  
T.F.H. Publications, Inc. Ltd.  
211 West Sylvania Avenue  
Post Office Box 427  
Neptune, N.J. 07753
- Hunting Dogs of America*  
by Jeff Griffen  
Doubleday & Co., 1964  
Garden City, N.Y.

However, Le Boutellier believes that "it's a crime not to take advantage of these dogs. Some of them are just naturals in the field. What I recommend is for a person to get a good strong pup from a reliable breeder and take advantage of the expertise of a professional trainer. The important thing is a good strong pup."

As far as disposition is concerned, there probably isn't a gentler breed around. The dogs are loud and evident watchdogs that could scare any intruder away. However, like most working dogs, they're happy to play ball—even with a stranger.

According to Mrs. Youmans, "You can expect the dogs to be excellent around kids." "In fact," she explained, "generally you couldn't teach these dogs to be mean. They'll bark, but they're gentle and love people." She prefers to see these dogs kept as house pets or at least close to the home, since "they require attention and human companionship."

For the person who wants a dog other than the familiar retrievers, for whatever reason, he would do well to consider the Standard. There is no doubt that they are companionable, hardworking dogs. Lydia Hopkins, in *The New Complete Poodle*, probably summed it up best: "There are few closer bonds than that between the hunter and his clever dog. The poodle is meant to be man's companion. His one desire in life is to share all of his master's activities. Retrieving is his ancient and honorable profession."

There is a place for these dogs; in a goose pit, peering out of a floating blind, or hidden next to a cedar in some backwoods beaver pond. These dogs have the potential, and they certainly have the intelligence and the stamina to get the job done.

It's a shame that these impressive dogs are losing ground in the hunting fields. Though it would take some effort on the hunter's part to find a puppy of a line worthy of more than just exhibition, the effort extended to find that "good strong pup" could provide someone with years of loyal, hardworking companionship. □

*Jeff Curtis is the wildlife education coordinator for the Game Commission and an avid hunter.*

## Letters

### Geography Lesson

I was amazed and frankly puzzled, as I read the article on the Dismal Swamp by Stephen C. Ausband in the August issue of *Virginia Wildlife* and realized there was no mention of the City of Chesapeake and when I looked at the map, Chesapeake did not even appear on the map!

Let me give you a little education—*Forbes Magazine* says we are the fastest growing city in the south. With a population of 140,000 and growing, how could you forget us? With a land area of 153 square miles, how could you not see us?

We are a very proud city; proud of our hospitality, recreational and cultural facilities and beauty with which our community abounds. For us to be omitted from our history and association with the Great Dismal Swamp from its beginning to the present is a slight that I am sure you will want to rectify in the future.

Sidney M. Oman  
Mayor  
City of Chesapeake

### Litter

I just finished reading Virginia Shepherd's July column concerning the "wilderness slobs" that leave debris in the woods.

I, too, share her disgust at finding bottles and cans on the bank of my favorite fishing hole.

One suggestion that I would make is to "take a trash can fishing. . . ."

My brother and I always pack a small trash can as "standard equipment" when we go fishing or hunting. Then, as we are leaving our favorite fishing hole, we'll pick up a can or bottle as we're walking toward the car for a lunch or rest break.

This doesn't take a whole lot of effort. We don't try to "police the whole area," but we do try to make a little contribution to a cleaner environment.

Not only do we often "get our limit," but we also get a nice "feeling"

## From the Backcountry

when we've done our part to keep nature clean.

Also, who knows, some "wilderness slob" may see us picking up his debris, and decide to clean up his act!

Allan B. Painter  
Staunton

## New Access Sites Open on James River

Three new boating access sites have been opened on the upper James River in Botetourt County. Horseshoe Bend Landing is located just off Route 43, about six miles northwest of Buchanan. A concrete ramp is provided, but the water is shallow at the site, and trailered boats cannot be launched when the river is low.

Springwood Landing provides a parking lot and pedestrian trail to the river. It is located beneath the Route 630 bridge on the south bank of the river at Springwood, about 4.2 river miles upstream from Buchanan. The landing provides access for canoes and light boats that can be hand-carried to and from the river.

Buchanan Landing is located on Exchange Street, about one block west of Route 11 in Buchanan. A concrete ramp suitable for launching trailered boats is provided.

The boating access sites are open to the public and were built by the Game Commission with money from boat registration and titling fees, and matching funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Westvaco Corporation donated the lease for the Horseshoe Bend site, the Virginia Department of

Highways and Transportation provided the land for the Springwood site, and the Town of Buchanan donated the lease for the Buchanan site. More information and directional maps to the site can be obtained by writing or calling the Game Commission, Education Division, 4010 West Broad Street, P.O. Box 11104, Richmond, VA 23230-1104, 804/257-1000. □

## Nongame Check-Off Funds Support the Best

Rockwood Park Nature Center in Chesterfield County recently was honored as the best parks and recreation facility in the country by the National Association of Counties. The center was the product of ingenuity, hard work, and funds from our own Virginia Nongame Wildlife and Endangered Species program. As one of the first projects funded by the four-year-old tax check-off program, the center received \$6,000 for signs, mounts, exhibit materials and a promotional brochure from the Game Commission.

The center opened on April 20, 1985, and during the first eight months of operation, over 5,500 local residents walked through its doors and into a short lesson on environmental education by way of its hands-on exhibits. The center's largest interpretive exhibit is designed to introduce the visitor to swamp ecology. Also included are exhibits on animal tracks, animal shelters, a "Test Your Nature IQ" and a "touch table" full of deer antlers, snake skins, and turtle shells.

The national award is quite an honor for the cooperative efforts of the Game Commission and the Chesterfield County Parks and Recreation Department. Thanks to all the contributors who helped make it possible for the Chesterfield Parks and Recreation staff to produce a facility that not only reflects exceptional creativity and superior craftsmanship, but also stands as the model environmental education facility in the country. □

*Editor's Note: This month's echo from the past is taken from Vol. 5, No 5, November-December 1925  
and Vol. 5, No. 6 January-February 1926.*



## Huntin'

by Frederick Halsey

Haze in low lines over the creek bottom. The faint, fragrant tang of wood smoke and burning leaves. Sumac and creeping briar stained red with the blood of the dying year. The yellow of a birch, scarlet of maple, the deepening red of oak over the mottled tapestry of the underbrush.

Leaves rustling underfoot, held in the embrace of creeping briars. Leaves fluttering slowly downward from the trees on the brook brink. The murmur of water pouring over the bowlers below the pool.

The jangle of harness and the cheery cry of the plowman in the brown stubblefield.

The soft bleating of sheep and the jingle of a bell from the pasture on the hillside.

Two dogs, eager, alert, casting back and forth ahead in the briar patch, the younger rushing rapidly from side to side, the elder moving across the back, playing the wind, overlooking nothing. A man, gun held ready, advancing steadily over the area covered by the dogs.

A sudden stop. The older dog, checking himself in full stride, becomes a rigid statute, one foot uplifted, head turned and nose and eyes pointing toward a tangle of briar and dead grass, the young dog, trembling with eagerness, halted, tense and strained, a few yards away.

A low-voiced, "Steady, girl, steady," as the hunter cautiously moves for-

ward. A quick movement among the briars, the whirr of many wings, a rush upward—Bang! Bang!

"Steady girl! Steady, boy! Two down. Bring 'em in! Both down."

Two brown feather balls carried in careful mouths and deposited at the hunter's feet. Eager brown eyes, pleading for praise. Red tongues protruding from mouths panting from excitement.

A pat on waiting heads.

"Good boy! Good girl! Go hunting! Birds, Flitterghost! Birds, Trump Faster! Hyah! Hunt 'em!"

Gosh! Think of having to work in a city!—Fred. Halsey, in Liberty.

## A Food Suggestion For City Sportsmen

by M.D. Hart

Did it ever occur to you that while you are hunting you often have the opportunity to do some planning in the interest of the game? Don't you think it would be time and money well spent if you would go by and see the farmer on whose land you hunt over year after year and say to him, "Mr. Jones, I have frequently found a covey or two of quail this season in that little pea patch down near your ice pond and there are now ten to fifteen left, and if we have a severe winter and if you will make a brush pile or a corn shock rick on the edge of this pea patch and feed these birds you may send me the bill for the time it takes you and at

least 50 percent more than the value of the cracked corn, tailings or whatever other feed you use."

Long distance weather forecasters are predicting that the 1925-26 winter is going to be a severe one, and since we haven't had a severe winter since 1917-18, it is not improbable that they may be right. More game is destroyed in one winter like that of 1917-18 than is taken by the hunters in probably three full hunting seasons. If the severe winter does not come as predicted, of course Mr. Jones will not feed the bobwhites, but if it does, to do as suggested, is but taking time by the forelock, insuring the necessary breeding stock being carried over on your favorite shooting grounds. □

## Help of Public Welcome

The Department of Game and Inland Fisheries invokes the vigilance and assistance of all citizens in securing enforcement of the game, fish and dog laws. Reports of violations will be appreciated, and in no instance will the name of the informant be disclosed without permission. □

The late Theodore Roosevelt said: "No generation has the right to use more than the interest of any natural resource. It is the duty of the State to preserve the capital intact for succeeding generations."



## Book Review

by Jeff Curtis

The Gordon MacQuarrie Trilogy  
compiled and edited by Zack Taylor  
Willow Creek Press,  
Oshkosh, Wisconsin  
\$45.00 slipcased set, \$15.00 individual  
hardcover

Have you ever wanted to sit down and read a book that had family, friends, game, humor and heart? A book that made you actually want to pack up and move to that particular place of cold water, willows and sand roads? How about becoming close friends with people you've never met? Readers, let me have the honor and privilege of introducing you to the Gordon MacQuarrie Trilogy. These three books; *Stories of the Old Duck Hunters*, *More Stories of the Old Duck Hunters*, and *Last Stories of the Old Duck Hunters* have more content and good reading than I've ever seen put into book form. These books deserve to be read.

If a current inventory of Gordon MacQuarrie stories is complete, the author wrote a total of 122 between the years of 1931 up until his untimely death in 1956. Of those, 64 were Old Duck Hunter stories. Zack Taylor, himself a well-known author who also contributes monthly to *Sports Afield*, undertook the task of finding and compiling these outdoor stories that were previously published in magazines throughout the country. The trilogy is a compilation of 51 of those remarkable exploits of the fictitious organization known as "The Old Duck Hunters' Association."

The sole members of the O.D.H.A. included MacQuarrie and his father-in-law, Al Peck, otherwise known as "Mr. President." A few friends, mostly those of the senior member, come and go throughout the stories, but for the most part the two gentlemen share a remarkably close and affectionate relationship.

The death of "Mr. President" caused the stories to come to an abrupt end. Although several major magazines urged MacQuarrie to continue with his writings, they were to be no more until several years later when the arrival of "Harry," the new Mr. President, allowed the association to resume its order of business.

Don't let the book titles mislead you. These are not only for waterfowlers. The books include stories ranging from duck hunting to muskie fishing and even to stealing a neighbor's decoys. Every story is exciting, concise and almost magical in the way MacQuarrie draws you into the events.

No doubt, Mac had a simple, endearing love both for the elements and Mr. President. One passage comes to mind from "The Bluebills Died at Dawn" from the "Last Stories" book:

"Just two men in a duck blind. One a comparatively young man, the other over sixty. Yet as I look back at that morning and the many other mornings

I have had with Mr. President, I sincerely wonder who is the younger. He has an enthusiasm that I shall never have at his age. He has a sturdy, whip-like strength in his spare frame. He has a gleam in his brown eyes that few younger men have. Perhaps it comes from peering through a smother of snow at incoming ducks.

"Or from the full, rounded out-of door life he has led in his chosen home—northern Wisconsin. I speculated with him once about the possibility of some day settling down in a summer clime. Perhaps a place where there would be a few ducks in the marshes and a few quail in the coverts.

"If I couldn't see a northern winter come, I wouldn't feel at home, and neither would you,' he told me."

The collection of stories is a sporting treasure. The books are attractively hard-bound in brown with gold foil lettering and a handsome cover medallion. Each set is contained in a distinctive, matching slip-case. In the interest of tradition, the publishers printed the first book of the trio in the original type style that Stackpole used in 1967.

As an extra, you'll enjoy Zack Taylor's introductions that precede each story. Usually, I wish that introductions were omitted entirely, because mostly they break the atmosphere that the writer has created, and serve more as a podium for somebody's analysis of what he thinks the author is saying. Not at all the case with Taylor's preludes. They include an informative bit of history that sets the stage for what you will soon read. Kept to a couple of paragraphs, Zack's comments are worthy mini-stories themselves, succinct, clean and enticing. I believe that Mac would have approved.

As you can guess, I'm fairly ecstatic about what Willow Creek Press has produced in the MacQuarrie trilogy. And after you read a story or two I'm sure you'll be too.

Let's let Mac do the selling. Here, in, "The Old Brown Mackinaw" from the first book of the series, his father-in-law, the orginial Mr. President, is no longer with us. Harry is his new-found friend and companion:

"He almost fell asleep at the table. Then he yawned and whistled and looked out the door and said he was glad it was snowing hard—'Don't shoot at anything but cans in the morning.' He flopped on the davenport and was gone to that far-off land where no trout of less than 5 pounds comes to a surface fly and the duck season runs all year.

I tidied up and washed the dishes. I smelled the weather and smoked a pipe. The fireplace light danced on the big yellow cedar beams. The snow hissed against the window. The President of the Old Duck Hunter's Association should have been there.

Maybe he was. At any rate, I went out to the shed and took the old brown mackinaw off its nail and brought it in and laid it over Harry's shoulders. It looked just fine there."

Ah, the imagery is perfect. □

## Phone in a Poacher

As of October 1, you will be able to use the toll-free number, 1-800-237-5712 to report wildlife violations throughout the state as part of an effort by the Game Commission to crack down on poaching. PHONE, an acronym for Poachers Hurt Our Natural Environment, is the name of the new program designed to give sportsmen and interested citizens a chance to alert the Game Commission to wildlife violations on a 24-hour hotline. Upon receipt of the call, wildlife investigators will follow up the reported violation. The caller will not be required to testify in court and will remain anonymous, but should make arrangements to stay in touch with Commission personnel in case further information is needed.

Posters with the toll-free number will be distributed throughout the state as part of PHONE, and increased law enforcement efforts, including aerial surveys, will supplement ground patrols. Write that number down: 1-800-237-5712. □



VIRGINIA  
WILDLIFE

## They're Yours For The Taking— When You Subscribe To Virginia Wildlife

Every new subscriber to Virginia Wildlife from now until November 1 will receive this 19½ X 27½ inch full-color poster and 12 issues of the finest quality wildlife magazine around. Although our rates went up as of July 1, we are still committed to giving you your money's worth, including all the latest hunting and fishing information, along with maps and information on where-to-go in the state and in-depth looks at wildlife issues in the state. Keep informed on what's happening to wildlife in your state—Subscribe now! (Please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery of your poster and magazine.)

To be an eastern pipistrelle, or any of the more than 900 species of bats known in the world, you have to be pretty specialized. For example, curl your toes as if you were trying to grasp something, like the wall of a cave. They're pointed toward the back, right? In bats it's just the opposite. Their hind legs are partially rotated and their feet are rotated 180 degrees, something that is very important to an animal that spends much of its life suspended head-down. The toes on each foot also have well-developed claws; curved and pointed enough so that the tiny eastern pipistrelle can hang from our fingers—its claws hook over the little ridges that make our finger prints!

Of the 15 species of bats known from Virginia, the eastern pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus subflavus*, is the smallest, with a total length of less than four inches and body weight scarcely a fourth of an ounce, or around six to seven grams. But average weight tells us little about this and most species of bats. Pips, as they are affectionately referred to by chiroptologists—students of bats—may weigh as little as four grams at the end of the hibernating period, and as a result of fat accumulation, may increase their weight by as much as 40 percent or more prior to hibernation.

During hibernation, a bat's metabolic rate is greatly reduced and its body temperature is near that of the surrounding air. Bats are often in such deep torpor that they appear dead. During extended periods, and under proper conditions, water droplets may form on the tips of the hair as the

V · I · R · G · I · N · I · A · · S

# The Eastern Pipistrelle

by John F. Pagels  
photo by Kerry T. Givens

W · I · L · D · L · I · F · E

result of condensation, but their fur is not wet at the base.

The pip hibernates in caves or mines or various other man-made structures where humidity, temperature and certain other parameters are moderated in such a way that the bat can subsist nearly entirely on its fat through a three to four month period. But pips and many hibernators don't stay in deep hibernation throughout the winter period. Perhaps to void wastes, to move to a warmer or cooler part of the hibernaculum, in response to disturbance, or even to mate, hibernating bats occasionally rouse to activity temperature and move about.

The interesting part is not so much that they rouse periodically, but that they

have the capability of arousing from a very reduced body temperature without the aid of an external heat source. Certainly, we could not do that. Hibernators, and certain nonhibernators, possess a special kind of tissue known as brown adipose tissue, or BAT. The tissue is important in nonshivering thermogenesis—that is, producing heat without shivering. Natural selection has provided enough BAT to allow bats a certain number of warm-ups during the hibernation period. However, if the bat warms up too often, as the result of disturbance by voices and flashlights in caves, for example, and uses up its BAT prematurely, it may not be able to survive hibernation.

The eastern pipistrelle

mates in late summer, and sometimes again in winter, and maybe even again in early spring at the end of hibernation. The young are born in spring when insects abound to support the lactating mother and hungry young. Individuals that mate in late summer don't have to mate again the next spring in order to bear young then. Like many bats of the temperate region, the female eastern pipistrelle stores spermatozoa in the uterus until spring at which time ovulation and fertilization takes place and development ensues in a typical mammalian fashion.

Although male and female pipistrelles occupy the same hibernaculum, females form maternity colonies in the spring separate from adult males, and the maternity sites are usually at some distance from the hibernaculum. Man-made structures such as barns and attics often serve as maternity roosts.

The usual number of young is two, and the newborn twins emerge hairless with their eyes and ears sealed. The baby pips hind toes, thumbs, and claws are well-developed, which is critical for hanging on to either their mother or the walls and ceilings of their roost. Young pips begin to fly and forage for insects much like adults at about four weeks, and reach adult size by about 45 days. The remainder of the summer is spent in preparation for hibernation. Presumably with a little luck, this tiny mammal may live as long as 12 or more years. □

John F. Pagels is a mammalogist at Virginia Commonwealth University who specializes on the mammals of Virginia.



